

S-115
Academy Grove Historic District
Upper Fairmount vicinity
annual public fair

c. 1860-1872

The Academy Grove Historic District comprises two well-known frame buildings, the Fairmount Academy and the Knights of Pythias Hall. Located between Upper and Lower Fairmount, these two Italianate-influenced structures are enhanced by a setting of a mature grove of cedar, oak and pine. Notable features which tie both buildings together architecturally include the bracketed eaves and corner pilasters. In addition to its architectural significance, the district is important for its association with the development of public education and civic organizations in the county during the second half of the nineteenth century.

Local tradition refers to an 1839 date of establishment for a school on "Potato Neck." The earliest documented reference is found in the will of Lazarus Maddox, proved on March 26, 1841,

It is my will that I now establish and confirm the following to be the line between my home farm above described and my other lands hereafter mentioned--commencing at the north-west corner of my field adjoining Edward T. Hall's store on the north side of the county road in Potato Neck, from thence running with a straight line to a marked pine tree standing near the School House down the neck on the same side of the County road aforesaid.(JP5/117)

This marked pine and school house are referred to in an 1848 plat of a nineteen and three-eighth's acre parcel of Daniel Ballard's land, known as "School House Ridge." With these two firm references, it appears that a school was located on or near this site as early as 1839. However, a proper deed had not been executed for the school house ground. In 1867, Thomas Emery Ballard granted

MARION QUADRANGLE
MARYLAND-SOMERSET CO.

7.5 MINUTE SERIES ORTHOPHOTOMAP (TOPOGRAPHIC)

5860 11 NW
(PRINCESS ANNE)

NE
(E) 429 430 47'30" 431 1 150 000 FEET 432 433 434 75°45' 38°07'30"



4219
2.3 MI. TO MD. 413
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4217
4216

S-115
ACADEMY
GROVE
HISTORIC
DISTRICT
SOMERSET
COUNTY,
MARYLAND

100 000
FEET

18-429080-
42 950

Holland Point

In 1888, the Fairmount Academy building was graced with a school bell ordered through the McShane Bell Foundry, McShane Company of Baltimore, Maryland, and probably delivered by steamboat. From the late nineteenth century until 1927, all twelve grades were offered by an academy staff of five; one principal and four teachers. Beginning in 1927, the grades were cut back to one through seven, and from 1944 to 1969 only the first six grades were taught.

In 1972 a decision to auction off all unused school building was made by the Somerset County Commissioners. This action galvanized a group of local residents to establish the Fairmount Academy Historical Association. This group maintains the two buildings and holds an annual fair in the spring.

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Fairmount Academy (Potato Neck School) and Knights of Pythias Hall

and/or common Academy Grove Historic District (preferred)

2. Location

street & number North side of Maryland Route 361 (Fairmount - Kentville Rd) p/a not for publication

city, town Upper Fairmount ☒ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland code 24 county Somerset code 039

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Fairmount Academy Historical Association

street & number c/o Nevette Muir

city, town Upper Fairmount n/a vicinity of state Maryland 21867

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Clerk of Court

street & number Somerset County Courthouse

city, town Princess Anne state Maryland 21853

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Maryland Historical Trust
Historic Sites Inventory

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☒ no

date 1983 ☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Maryland Historical Trust, 21 State Circle

city, town Annapolis state Maryland 21401

7. Description

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Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check one

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date n/a

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**Number of Resources****Contributing**20002**Noncontributing**0 buildings0 sites0 structures0 objects0 Total

Number of previously listed
National Register properties
included in this nomination: 0

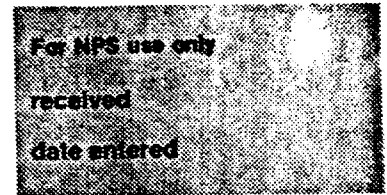
Original and historic functions
and uses: educational, civic

The Academy Grove Historic District comprises two Italianate-influenced frame buildings located in a grove of trees on the northwest side of Maryland Route 361 east of the village of Fairmount in Somerset County, Maryland. The two buildings include the Fairmount Academy, constructed c. 1860-67 to serve as a public school for the Potato Neck District, and the Knights of Pythias Hall, erected adjacent to the Academy c. 1872 by the Fairmount Lodge No. 77 of the Knights of Pythias. The two buildings are similar in form, construction, and detailing. Both are rectangular frame structures, two stories high, with symmetrical three-bay principal facades facing southeast. Entrances feature double-leaf doors in transomed Classical surrounds. The buildings are sheathed in weatherboard, and feature bracketed cornices and narrow paneled pilasters at their corners. The Knights of Pythias Hall is gable-roofed, while the Academy has a hipped roof to which an open belfry was added in 1888. Interior plan and appointments are likewise similar, with a vestibule and stair hall across the front, opening into a large open class or meeting room on each floor. The two buildings served a common educational function as early as 1883, when the Knights of Pythias Hall was rented by the Board of Education; when the Fairmount Lodge disbanded in 1911, the Hall continued to provide additional classroom space for the Academy.

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet Academy Grove Historic District Somerset County, Maryland Item number 7 Page 1

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

The two buildings comprising the Academy Grove Historic District are described briefly below:

Fairmount Academy (S-108)

Fairmount Academy is located between Upper Fairmount and Fairmount on the northwest side of Maryland 361. The frame school building faces south-east with the axis of the roof running in a northwest/southeast direction.

The c. 1860-1867 two-story rectangular frame Italianate structure is supported by a minimal brick foundation and covered by a steeply pitched asphalt tile hip roof. The building measures 30'7" by 45'7" and is uniformly sheathed with weatherboard siding. A small frame bell tower is centered on the roof.

The southeast facade is three bays across with center double doors flanked by 12/12 sash windows. The double doors are replacements but the four-light transom and dentiled lintel are original features. Three 12/12 sash windows pierce the second floor. The four corners of the building are trimmed with paneled pilasters, and the eaves are distinguished with brackets.

Both side walls are pierced by an asymmetrical arrangement of 12/12 sash which light the main rooms on both floors. A side entrance into the front hall and an interior brick stove stack are on the southwest elevation.

The rear facade has four boarded windows, two on each floor, along with a back door.

Inside both the first and second floors are divided into two rooms; a small stair hall or vestibule in front and the large classroom behind. On the main floor twin stairs flank the entrance and rise opposite each other to the second floor. A heavily turned newel post and tapered oak balusters support an oval profile handrail. Under each stair a small room has been partitioned for a bathroom on the right and storage on the left. Two door openings pierce the vestibule partition and open into the first floor classroom. A centrally located, fluted iron post supports the floor above. Blackboards are fixed to the side and back walls.

The second floor is divided in the same manner. However, a stage has been added to the large classroom. Standing on the stage is a platform with the school bell inscribed by McShane Bell Foundry, Henry McShane and Company, Baltimore, MD., 1888. The front room was mainly used for storage but does contain a ladder for access onto the roof.

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Academy Grove Historic District

Continuation sheet Somerset County, Maryland Item number

7

Page 2

GENERAL DESCRIPTION (continued)

Knights of Pythias Hall

(S-109)

The Knights of Pythias Hall is located next to Fairmount Academy between Upper and Lower Fairmount on the northwest side of Maryland 361. The frame building faces southeast with the axis of the gable roof running in a northwest/southeast direction.

The c. 1872-1875 two-story three bay by two room weatherboard frame structure is supported by a minimal brick foundation and is covered by a medium sloped asphalt tile roof. The eaves are extended as well as bracketed. Like the adjacent Fairmount Academy, the building is trimmed on each corner with paneled pilasters.

The southeast facade is three bays across with center double doors and flanking 6/6 sash windows. The double doors are replacements, but the simple classical surround, dentiled cornice and two-light transom are original features. Two 6/6 sash windows light the second floor, and one 6/6 sash window lights the attic.

Each side is three bays across. The southwest facade has three 6/6 sash on each floor, while the northeast side has a side entrance that is flanked by 6/6 sash windows. Like the Academy building, the rear windows have been boarded over. A brick stove stack rises out of the center of the building against the interior partition.

The plan of this building is similar to the Academy. The main difference is that only one stair, to the right of the entrance, leads to the second floor. A heavily turned newel post and turned balusters support an oval profile hand-rail which curves to the second floor. The main room is fitted with blackboards due to the later use as a school. Two square wood piers support the second floor. The small room left of the entrance is a later alteration.

The second floor is divided in the same manner with no unusual features.

8. Significance

S-115

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates c.1860-1872 **Builder/Architect** unknown

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Applicable Criteria: A, C
 Criteria Exceptions: n/a
 Level of Significance for Evaluation: local

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY:

The Academy Grove Historic District is significant for its architecture, comprising two well-preserved frame public buildings showing the influence of the Italianate style, a style rarely used in rural Somerset County. Notable features of both buildings include bracketed cornices and paneled corner pilasters. In addition, the District is significant for its association with the development of public education and civic organizations in the county during the third quarter of the 19th century. The Fairmount Academy is the best-preserved survivor of the county's earliest efforts to create a public educational system. The c. 1872 Knights of Pythias Hall is the only known structure in the county erected to serve as a meeting place for that organization; it is also significantly associated with education, having provided additional classroom space for the Academy as early as 1883.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
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received
Date entered

Continuation sheet Academy Grove Historic District
Somerset County, Maryland Item number 8 Page 3

HISTORY AND SUPPORT:

Local tradition has held to an 1839 date of establishment for a school house on Potato Neck. The earliest documented reference is found in the will of Lazarus Maddox, which was proved on March 26, 1841,

It is my will that I now establish and confirm the following to be the line between my home farm above described and my other lands hereafter mentioned - commencing at the northwest corner of my field adjoining Edward T. Hall's Store on the north side of the County road in Potato Neck, from thence running with a straight line to a marked pine tree standing near the School House down the neck on the same side of the County road aforesaid."¹

This marked pine and school house are referred to in an 1848 plat of a 19 3/8 acre parcel of Daniel Ballard's land, known as "School House Ridge."² With these two firm references, it appears that a school was located on this site as early as 1839. However, a proper deed had not been executed for the school house ground. In 1867, Daniel Emery Ballard and Rosa Ballard granted to William Muir and others, "one and one half acres of land more or less to have and to hold the same in and for the use and purposes of a School House or Academy for the Education of Youth."³

Despite an uncertain date of construction for the extant academy building, it seems most probable that the trustees wanted a binding deed that would insure ownership of a new academy. A pre-1867 construction date is further strengthened by the fact that the Somerset County Board of Education Minutes begin in 1867, and no mention is made of erecting an academy in the Potato Neck District. The name "Fairmount Academy" was evidently assigned to the building around the time of its construction, for early Board of Education references mention Fairmount Academy specifically. For instance, it was ordered by the Board on April 17, 1867, that, "The Treasurer pay to the teacher of Fairmount Academy as Librarian the sum of twenty dollars provided by Chapter 7, Section 1 of the Public School Law."⁴

The next building project at "Academy Grove" involved the construction of the Knights of Pythias Hall, c. 1872. The Society of Knights of Pythias, was founded in 1864 by Henry Rathbone (1839-1889) in Washington, D.C. Fairmount Lodge No. 77 was established on May 5, 1872.⁵ Due to the close similarity in architectural details between the Fairmount Academy and the Knights of Pythias Hall, it is thought the structure was assembled not long after the Fairmount Lodge's inception. The first reference to the building is found in the Board of Education minute book of August 14, 1883, when a bill was submitted to the

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Continuation sheet Academy Grove Historic District
Somerset County, Maryland Item number

8 and 10

Page

4

HISTORY AND SUPPORT (continued)

Board for a \$60.00 rental of the Knights of Pythias Hall at Fairmount.⁶ The Fairmount Chapter of Knights of Pythias dissolved in 1911, but the building was still used for additional classroom space.

In 1888, the Fairmount Academy Building was graced with a school bell ordered through the McShane Bell Foundry, McShane Company of Baltimore, MD. The notice of purchase was signed by John Hall, William E. Muir, A. Whittington, John Ford and L.H. Miles.⁷ From the late 19th century until 1927, all twelve grades were offered by an academy staff of five: one principal and four teachers. Beginning in 1927, the grades were cut back to one through seven, and from 1944 to 1969 only the first six grades were taught.⁸

In 1972, a decision to auction off all unused school buildings was made by the Somerset County Commissioners. This action galvanized a group of local residents to establish the Fairmount Academy Historical Association. This group holds a lease on the property, as long as they maintain the buildings.

Footnotes

¹ Somerset County Will Book, JP 5/117, March 26, 1841.

² Survey of Daniel Ballard Land, August 12, 1848.

³ Somerset County Deed Book 4/6/1867.

⁴ Somerset County Board of Education Minutes, April 17, 1867.

⁵ Information for Knights of Pythias supplied by Viola Landen, a Fairmount resident.

⁶ Board of Education Minutes, August 14, 1883.

⁷ Notice for purchase of bell on file at Fairmount Academy, 1888.

⁸ Chesapeake Bay Magazine, "Fairmount Academy, 1839-1969", Michael C. Wooten, March 1980.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

The nominated property, 1½ acres, comprises the single lot upon which the buildings stand, and represents the historic landscaped setting around these two structures. It comprises the property transferred in 1867 from Thomas E. Ballard to the trustees of Fairmount Academy, and is traditionally known as "Academy Grove," a reference to the mature trees which enhance the setting of the buildings. Boundaries are depicted on the attached map.

9. Major Bibliographical References

S-115

See Continuation Sheet No. 5

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 1.5 acresQuadrangle name Marion, MarylandQuadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	8	4	2	9	0	8	0	4	2	1	6	9	5	0
Zone		Easting				Northing								

B

Zone		Easting				Northing								

C

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D

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E

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F

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H

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Verbal boundary description and justification

See Continuation Sheet No. 4

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Touart - Architectural Historianorganization Somerset County Historical Trust date October 27, 1983street & number 424 North Somerset Avenue telephone Home 301-651-1094city or town Princess Anne state Maryland 21853


12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

<input type="checkbox"/> national	<input type="checkbox"/> state	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> local
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As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

 3-20-84title STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER

date

For HCRS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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date entered

Continuation sheet Academy Grove Historic District
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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES:

Chesapeake Bay Magazine, "Fairmount Academy, 1839-1969", Michael C. Wooten,
March 1980.

Board of Education Minute Books - 1867 - 1883, Housed at Board of Education,
Princess Anne, Maryland.

Landen, Viola, Personal papers and history of Fairmount Academy and Knights of
Pythias.

Miscellaneous records on file at Fairmount Academy - Notice for purchase of
Bell, 1888.

Somerset County Deed Books.

Somerset County Wills.

Survey of Daniel Ballard Land, August 12, 1848, Supplied by L. Q. Powell.

E.S. ADKINS
316/263
133.17A
P.298

HELEN C
JONES
W/REDB 7/12/22
29.95A.
P.268

UPPER FAIRMOUNT

S-115

RUTH W. LONG
295/457
120.00A.
P.118

FAIRMOUNT ACADEMY
DONALD R. McCLELLAND
280/200
92.71A.
P.249

CHESAPEAKE
FROGMEN
CORP. INC.

262/530
1108A.
P.251

KNIGHTS OF Pythias
Hill

NATIONAL REGISTER
BOUNDARY

ACADEMY GROVE
HISTORIC DISTRICT
SOMERSET COUNTY,
MARYLAND
1983

BOILER MAINTENANCE CO
255/630
89.00A
P.154

THOMAS B.
BOWDEN
309/596
15.00A.
P.45

MAP 48-
P.47

HALL
CREEK

(1" = 600' Scale)

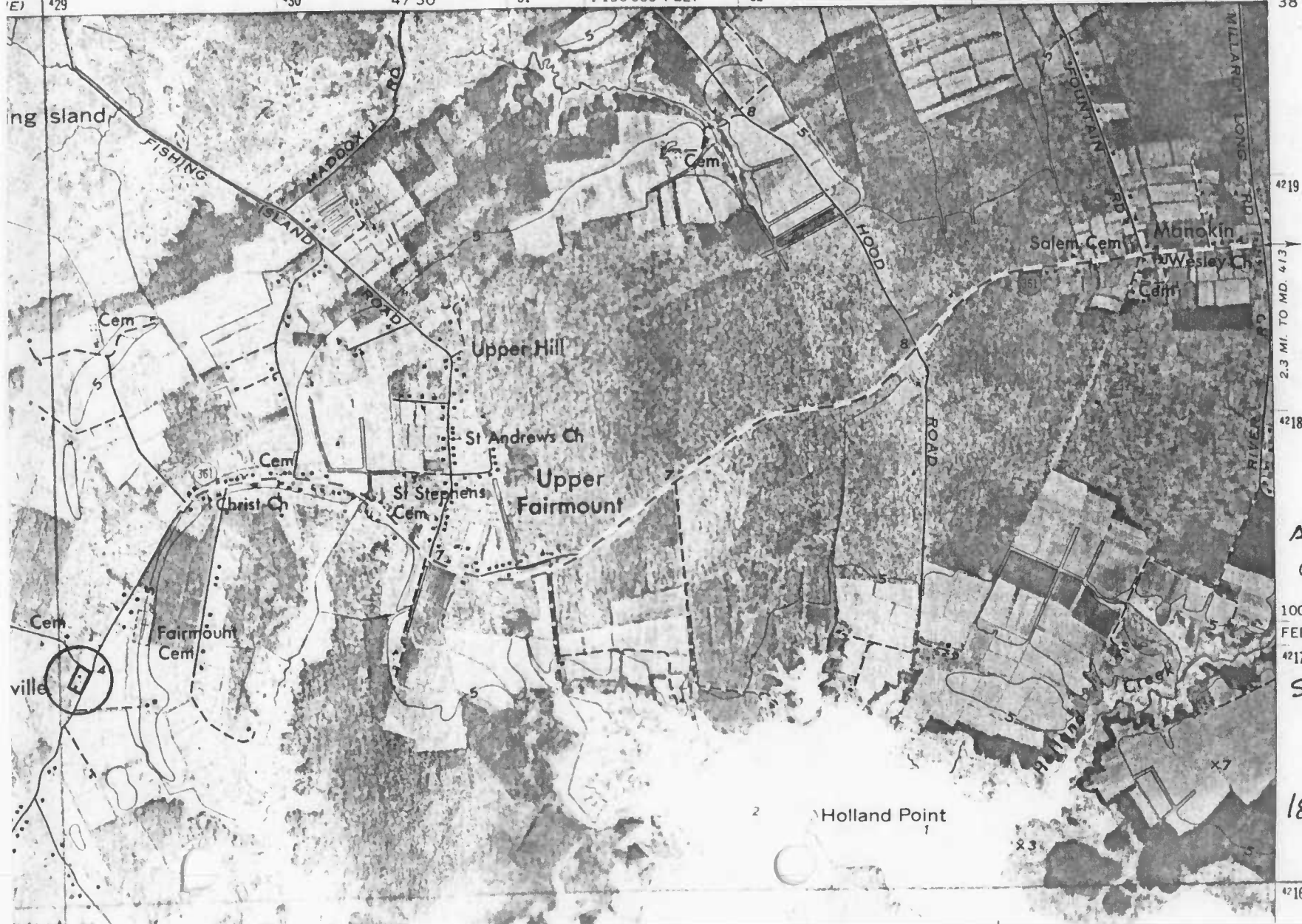
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MARION QUADRANGLE
MARYLAND-SOMERSET CO.

7.5 MINUTE SERIES ORTHOPHOTOMAP (TOPOGRAPHIC)

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(PRINCESS ANNE)

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18-429080-
42 950

2 Holland Point

4216



Fairmount Academy

Upper Fairmount

CVD 11/90

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Fairmount Academy
Upper Fairmount

CVD 11/90

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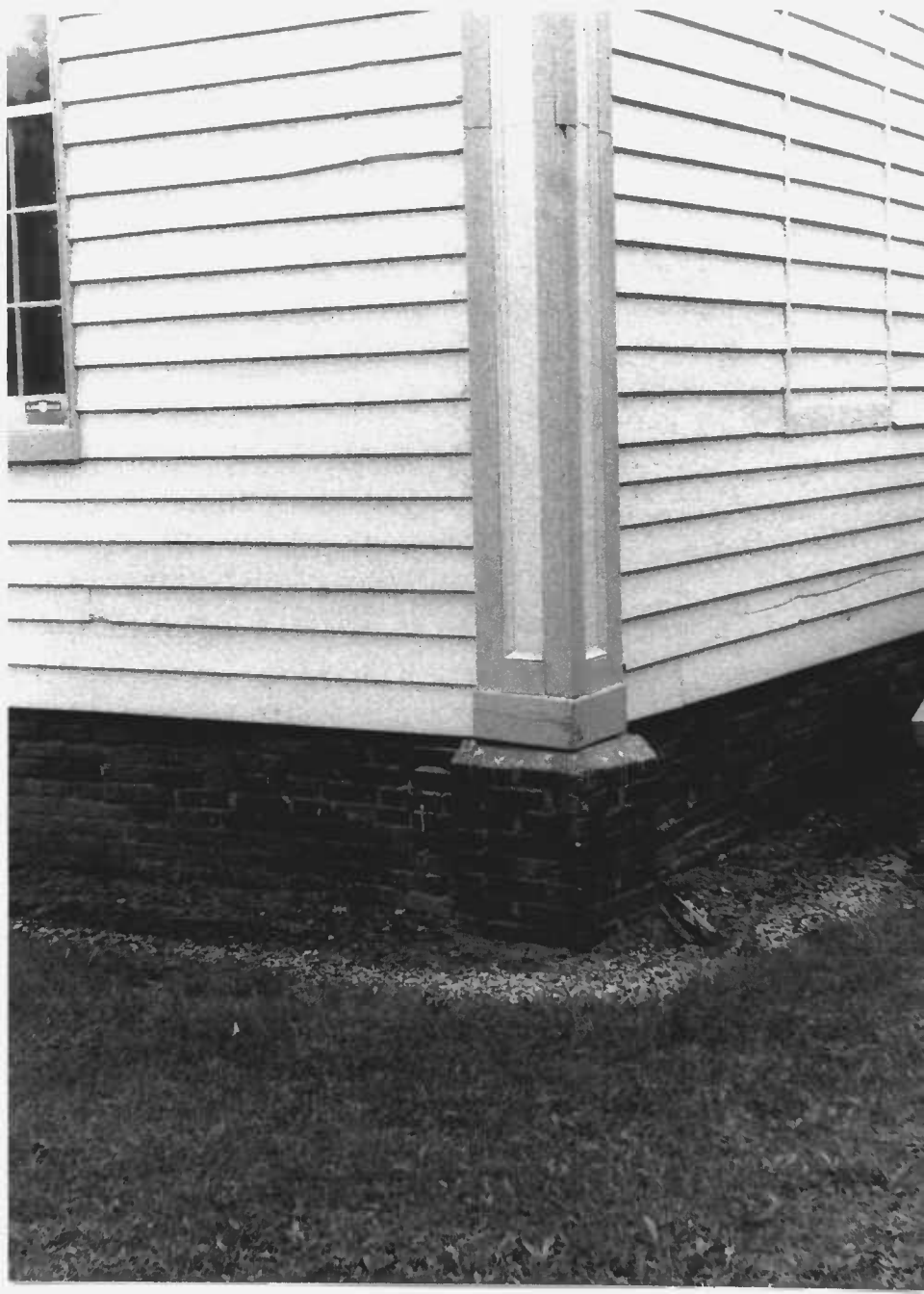


Fairmount Academy

upper Fairmount

CVD 11/90

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Fairmount Academy

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Fairmount Academy
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T/A CAI
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Fairmount Academy

Upper Fairmount

CVD 11/90

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Somerset -108

Fairmount Academy

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ACADEMY GROVE H.D., SOMERSET COUNTY, MARYLAND

"Fairmount Academy

S-115

near Upper Fairmount

southeast elevation

Photographer-Paul Touart

September 1983

NEG AT MHT, 21 STATE CIRCLE, ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401



Somerset - 1018

Fairmount Academy

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Somerset - 108
Fairmount Academy

S-115



SOMERSET - 108

FAIRMOUNT ACADEMY

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ACADEMY GRAVE H.D., SOMERSET COUNTY, MARYLAND

Fairmount Academy
near Upper Fairmount
staircase
Photographer-Paul Touart
September 1983

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